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Twenty-first special session
Agenda item 8
Overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session of the General Assembly

Rapporteur: Ms. Gabriella **Vukovich** (Hungary)

I. Introduction

1. At the 1st plenary meeting of its twenty-first special session, on 30 June 1999, the General Assembly established an Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. At the same meeting, in accordance with section C of decision S-21/21, which provided that the Bureau of the preparatory committee should serve as the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, the Assembly elected Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury (Bangladesh) Chairman, by acclamation.

2. The Ad Hoc Committee held four formal meetings and a number of informal meetings, on 30 June and 1 July, to consider the item allocated to it, namely, agenda item 8, entitled "Overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development".

3. At its 1st meeting, on 30 June, in accordance with section C of decision S-21/21, the Ad Hoc Committee elected, by acclamation, Ms. Elza Berquó (Brazil), Mr. Ross Hynes (Canada), Ms. Armi Heinonen (Finland), Mr. Jacob Botwe Wilmot (Ghana), Ms. Gabriella Vukovich (Hungary), Ms. M. Patricia Durrant (Jamaica), Mr. Ryuichiro Yamazaki (Japan), Mr. Alexandru Niculescu (Romania) and Mr. Matia Mulumba Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda) as Vice-Chairmen. The Ad Hoc Committee decided that Ms. Vukovich would also serve as Rapporteur.

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4. In connection with its consideration of agenda item 8, the Ad Hoc Committee had before it the report of the Commission on Population and Development acting as the preparatory committee for the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly.[1]

5. At its 2nd meeting, on 30 June, the Ad Hoc Committee heard statements by the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund and the Director of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

6. At the same meeting, the Assistant Executive Director of the World Food Programme made a statement.

7. Also at the 2nd meeting, the representative of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research made a statement.

8. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

9. Also at the 2nd meeting, the following non-governmental organizations made statements: World Youth Alliance; International Women Bond; Caucus of the Advancement of the Billings Ovulation Method; and Caucus of Women, Children and the Family.

10. At its 3rd meeting, on 1 July, the Ad Hoc Committee heard a statement by the Director-General of the World Health Organization.

11. At the same meeting, statements were made by the Executive Directors of the United Nations Children's Fund and the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

12. Also at the 3rd meeting, the Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme made a statement.

13. At the same meeting, the representative of the World Bank made a statement.

14. Also at the 3rd meeting, the representative of the United Nations Development Fund for Women made a statement.

15. At the same meeting, the following non-governmental organizations made statements: Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health and Ethics; Women's Coalition; World Population Foundation; International Council of AIDS Service Organizations; Youth Coalition; and International Planned Parenthood Federation.

16. At the 4th meeting, on 1 July, the Ad Hoc Committee adopted its draft report contained in document A/S-21/AC.1/L.1, as introduced by the Rapporteur.

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Special Session, Supplement No. 1* (A/S-21/2 and Add.1 and 2).

II. Action taken by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole

Proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

17. At its 4th meeting, on 1 July, the Ad Hoc Committee considered the paper entitled "Proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development", contained in document A/S-21/2/Add.2. The Chairman drew the attention of the Ad Hoc Committee to three papers containing paragraphs agreed to as a result of the negotiations held in the informal meetings.

18. At the same meeting, statements in explanation of vote before the vote were made by the representatives of Argentina and Nicaragua (see chap. III).

19. Also at its 4th meeting, the Committee then decided to recommend the text entitled "Proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development" to the General Assembly for adoption at its twenty-first special session (see para. 21 below, draft resolution).

III. Explanations of vote before the vote

20. The following explanations of vote before the vote on the text on proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development are reproduced below at the request of the representatives of Argentina and Nicaragua.

Argentina

[Original: Spanish]

"Although the Argentine Republic supports the consensus reached in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole and the recommendation to the General Assembly to adopt the report, it wishes to emphasize that the Assembly has focused solely on certain aspects of the Cairo Programme of Action while failing to touch on other essential aspects having to do with population and development. Investment in education and comprehensive health, for example, should have been dealt with more thoroughly. Argentina requests that the following reservation be included in the section of the report on proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, which the Ad Hoc Committee is to submit to the General Assembly tomorrow morning.

"(a) The Argentine Republic wishes to express reservations regarding the concepts of 'reproductive health', 'sexual health' and 'reproductive rights' which are consistent with those expressed during the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo. Accordingly, it reaffirms that it does not accept that these concepts may cover abortion, either as a service or a method of fertility control. This reservation is premised on the universal nature of life, which exists from the moment of conception until natural death; it is from that very moment that an individual, as

a unique being that cannot be replicated, enjoys the right to life, which itself is the basis for all other rights;

"(b) The Argentine Republic expresses its reservation to the concepts of 'sexual health' and 'reproductive health', which it understands as being applicable solely within the context of an individual's 'comprehensive health', a concept which now constitutes the main element of maternity without risk. Women's health should therefore be considered throughout all phases of the life cycle (infancy, childhood, youth, climacteric and menopause) and should not be limited solely to the reproductive phase;

"(c) With regard to the terms 'contraception', 'family planning', 'new options' and 'underutilized methods', the Argentine Republic expresses its reservation and states that it does not agree that these terms may cover abortion or voluntary interruption of pregnancy. Their practical applications are to be understood solely within the limits established by the National Constitution;

"(d) The Argentine Republic expresses its reservation to the term 'gender', which it interprets to mean the biological sexual identity of men and women;

"(e) The Argentine Republic wishes formally to acknowledge the rights, duties and obligations of parents as regards the education of children in general and sex education in particular. Sex education is a basic element of the educational rights of parents. The right of parents to educate their children is a universal primary law, as stipulated in article 26, paragraph 3, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Recognition of this inalienable right must be respected in all settings, whether formal or informal, inside or outside the family, in which children receive any type of education, instruction and/or training;

"(f) It is the interpretation of the Argentine Republic that any mention of 'young people', 'youth', 'adolescents', 'children', 'young men' and 'young women' in connection with sex education and reproductive health programmes must imply recognition of the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents;

"(g) With regard to the term 'obligations to the community', the Argentine Republic wishes to state the following reservation: family planning must be based on freedom of decision and respect for the human rights of spouses without any State interference or any subjugation to any goals or targets set by any Government or organization;

"(h) The Argentine Republic wishes to place on record that the present report omits any reference to the need to strengthen the family within the framework of population and development policies as set out in chapter V of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, even though the family plays a fundamental role in the development process, as it is the basic building-block of society;

"(i) The Argentine Republic wishes to state the following reservation with regard to the use of the term 'voluntary quality family-planning services': this term excludes any type of coercion, incentive, quota, demographic target or other, similar concept.

"The reservations expressed herein are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Inter-American Human Rights Convention."

Nicaragua

[Original: Spanish]

"The Republic of Nicaragua wishes to join in the consensus on the present document and requests that the reservations expressed by the Nicaraguan delegation to the Cairo Programme of Action be included herein. The Nicaraguan delegation also wishes to express the following reservations:

"(a) When this report uses the terms 'female-controlled methods', 'new options', 'underutilized methods' and 'widest possible range of family-planning services', it is understood that they do not imply abortion or interruption of pregnancy;

"(b) The comprehensive education of children is a priority right of parents, in accordance with the Political Constitution of Nicaragua and article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

"(c) Nicaragua accepts the term 'gender' provided that it refers solely to men and women."

IV. Recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole

21. The Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

The General Assembly

Adopts the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development annexed to the present resolution.

[*For the text, see document A/S-21/5/Add.1.*]